

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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December 15, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

BRENT SCOWCROFT

SUBJECT:

NATO Ministerial Meeting

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

The Secretary asks that I pass you the following report:

I attended the NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels on December 11 and 12. It was among the more useful such meetings we have had in recent years. The opening session was devoted to defense standardization. We reached a compromise with the French under which an ad hoc committee of NATO's Atlantic Council will be established on a six months trial basis, with the French as members, to work on increased interoperability of equipment. The French agreed that the appropriate bodies of the NATO Atlantic Council would, at the same time, consider the broader issues related to standardization. In restricted sessions of the meeting, we discussed East-West relations -- including detente, Western communism, CSCE follow-up and MBFR. The British and Germans reconsidered their reservations to tabling option III at the end of the present session of the MBFR talks. It was agreed to table option III in its entirety on December 16. On Angola, I emphasized the distinction between indigenous Marxist inclinations and communist governments imposed by the USSR. I pointed out that as a result of Soviet intervention, the MPLA had been transferred from the weakest of the three factions in Angola into the strongest. If unchallenged, we would thus face a situation in which the Soviets had, in effect, imposed a communist government on an African country. The German, Italian, and British foreign ministers said they shared my concern. In my informal talks with ministers and in backgrounding the press, I emphasized the highly negative impact communist entry into Western Europeans' governments would have on American opinion, and our ability to sustain our defense commitment to Europe. While in Brussels I had conversations with both the Greek and Turkish foreign ministers. I was able in my discussions with the Greek foreign minister to persuade him of the necessity to be flexible on procedures for resuming the Cyprus talks. The Greeks had

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE
CONTAINS CODEWORD

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE
CONTAINS CODEWORD

-2-

been quite concerned that the Turks were continually adding new conditions and particularly now wish to have representatives of Greece and Turkey present in the intercommunal talks. I told him that I agreed it would not be wise to have them in the formal talks but that perhaps a compromise could be reached on including experts in subcommittees of the Cyprus talks. With the Turkish foreign minister I had a conversation which began with the usual long description of all the difficulties, most of which they feel were caused by the Greeks. After he got this out of his system, I was able to nudge him in the direction of the compromise I had earlier discussed with the Greeks and this indeed seemed to be the position on which they have now agreed to go to Secretary General Waldheim and request that he reconvene the talks. We are now hopefully over the procedural hurdle but we will certainly have to use our influence to keep these talks moving toward a successful conclusion. My impression is that the issues are not insuperable and that indeed both parties would like to see an early solution. I also met for two hours privately with the foreign ministers of Britain, Germany, and France. This was a continuation of the two restricted meetings we had had in New York in September on the most sensitive issues such as the southern flank of Europe. This time we began with an extended discussion of how to deal with the Western European communist parties. There was general agreement that these parties could not be allowed into power. The acid test was not whether they were willing to come into power by democratic means, but whether they would ever allow themselves to be voted out of power by democratic means -- which was less likely. The ministers shared the view that we should continue to force these parties to demonstrate their independence from Moscow but that we must resist their entry into power in any case because their ascendancy would clearly weaken public support for defense and for the alliance. I went into more detail on our policy in Angola. The ministers concurred in my analysis that a principal determinant of Soviet action had been the calculation that the U.S. would not react. They hoped the U.S. could do more, hopefully without leaving fingerprints. They showed an encouraging willingness to work diplomatically on the African and North African countries with whom they had close ties, to shore up resistance to the Soviet power play. The final topic was Yugoslavia. General Haig joined us and discussed the military contingencies as he saw them in the event of Soviet pressures such as an attack on Yugoslavia. Haig made a superb presentation, setting out rather grim choices for the

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE
CONTAINS CODEWORD

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE
CONTAINS CODEWORD

-3-

West, but the ministers were grateful that he showed concretely what the military -- and political -- issues would be. It was agreed that the political directors would study Haig's scenarios closely, and that Haig would further refine his analysis of the military aspects. These meetings have become progressively more candid and more productive, constituting in many ways a real breakthrough toward greater allied cohesion on the most critical and sensitive issues. I also had private meetings with my German and Italian colleagues before leaving Brussels.

In London I participated in our European chiefs of mission conference. I met with 30 of our European ambassadors, briefing them and exchanging views on our concept of detente, long term relations with the Soviet Union, and our policy toward Western European communist parties. I had a small lunch and private meeting with Callaghan Saturday. We had a good talk on the Middle East, Angola, and defense issues. I cautioned him not to expect any bold initiatives from the U.S. on Middle Eastern issues in 1976, and made clear that our attitude toward the Palestinians would depend on their position on Israel. 25X1

Callaghan said that my earlier expression of concern over impending UK defense budget cuts had had a favorable impact on cabinet discussions. Although pressure for cuts remains strong, they will, he said, probably not be disasterous. British import controls would also, he assured me, be quite modest. Callaghan suggested that the UK, U.S., and FRG defense, and foreign ministers get together to discuss nuclear and conventional defense doctrine. This is a proposal I think we should pursue, as it offers a unique opportunity not only to increase understanding of mutual defense issues and options, but also to give our major allies a heightened sense of participation in, and responsibility for their own security. This in turn will increase their willingness to maintain a responsible level of defense spending. Finally, I had a very good talk with the Iranian minister of finance this morning in London. We made substantial progress on the project we have been discussing with the Iranians and I will want to brief you more fully on that after I return. Warm regards.

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